

ON THE IMITATION (**ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ**)  
OF ANTIQUITY  
IN BYZANTINE LITERATURE

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This paper, given at Dumbarton Oaks on January 10, 1969, does not deal at all with the question of the aesthetic value of Byzantine rhetoric, nor with the problem of the public for which the Byzantine authors wrote, both of these subjects having been treated exhaustively by R. J. H. Jenkins in an article published in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 (1963). My purpose here is only to show *how* the Byzantines obtained the imitation of antiquity in their own literature.

**C**ONTRARY to the opinion prevailing in modern theories of art and modern poetics, which places the original work of the artist far above every imitation, no matter how good this imitation may be, Greek antiquity and the Byzantine Middle Ages cared very little for “original genius.” Even the anonymous author of the work Περὶ ὑψους (*Longinus on the Sublime*), of whom A. Lesky says, “er ist in seinem den Modernen unmittelbar ansprechenden Verständnis für die Werte grosser Dichtung als genialer Einzelgänger seiner Zeit weit vorausgeeilt” (as a solitary genius he by far passed beyond his own time through his understanding of the values of great poetry which directly appeals to modern man),<sup>1</sup> even he knows and appreciates “die eifrige Nachahmung der alten grossen Schriftsteller und Dichter” (the zealous imitation of the great ancient writers and poets) as a “zweiten Weg zu den Höhen” (a second way to the summit [of creative writing]).<sup>2</sup> He believes in the possibility of inspiration through this imitation, and that such inspiration may result in literary works—in analogy to the inspiration of the Delphic Pythia and the oracular decrees resulting from it. Like the priestess of Apollo, those affected by the divine spirit would also partake of the divine creative power, even though they had not shown any signs of originality before.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, about two generations before this work was written, the two critics and grammarians Caecilius of Caleacte and Dionysius of Halicarnassus had already developed a theory of imitation. Περὶ μιμήσεως by the latter, it is true, has been handed down to us in scanty fragments only,<sup>4</sup> but it is clear that the imitation of Attic culture, which demanded a close study of the classical models, would also call forth practical instructions concerning it. The young rhetorician wanted to know which authors he had to imitate, and in which way, in order to be successful. Quintilian is convinced of the high value of imitation and at the same time emphasizes the importance of exploiting several models simultaneously and in an eclectic way (*Inst. or.*, X.2.1): *neque enim dubitari potest, quin artis pars magna contineatur imitatione*, and (X.2.26): *plurimum bona ponamus ante oculos, ut aliud ex alio haereat et quo quidque loco conveniat aptemus*. This sentence by Quintilian already contains the recipe which has again and again proved to be effective with the numerous rhetoricians, epistolographers, and poets of the Empire, of late antiquity, and of the Byzantine Age. The *aliud ex alio haeret* was the magic formula for the admirably retentive memories of the authors who wrote those much abused patchwork poems, the centos, of which we shall have to speak in greater detail later on.

<sup>1</sup> A. Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1963), 886.

<sup>2</sup> Περὶ ὑψους, 13.2: ... καὶ ἄλλη τις . . . ὅδός ἐπί τὰ ὑψηλά τείνει. ποία δὲ καὶ τις αὔτη; ἡ τῶν ἔμπροσθεν μεγάλων συγγραφέων καὶ ποιητῶν μίμησις τε καὶ ζήλωσις.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: καὶ οἱ μὴ λίαν φοιβαστικοὶ τῷ ἐπέρων συνενθουσιῶσι μεγέθει.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. Schmid and O. Stählin, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte*, II (Munich, 1920), 470.

Who has read much can considerably improve his style: ἀνάγνωσις τροφὴ λέξεως<sup>5</sup>—this catchword was certainly followed very often.

Dion of Prusa recommends to the adept of good style the reading of the works of Menander and Euripides, not by himself but by having them recited to him because in that way he could better concentrate.<sup>6</sup> This short speech (No. 18) by Dion is a particularly important testimony for the theory of imitation in the early period of the Empire. What is said here, for example, on the significance of Homer was still valid throughout the Byzantine millennium: "Homer is the first poet every child meets, the grown-up man meets him in the middle of his life, and the old man as the last one, and from his wealth he gives to each of them as much as he can possibly hold."<sup>7</sup> In his judgement of other authors and literary genres Dion usually proceeds from the standpoint of a scarcely veiled utilitarianism.

From the centuries of late antiquity and of the Byzantine Age, by the way, we have only a trifling number of theoretical remarks on the subject of imitation.<sup>8</sup> The reason for this is probably that the tradition of imitating rhetorical models had for a long time become a customary practice. When customs and institutions have become firmly rooted in a continuous and stable convention, explanations and justifications of their existence are seldom wanted. Of the practical application of imitation, however, we have evidence from the various centuries.

From the Christian sphere we learn, for instance, that the sermons of St. Gregory of Nazianzus were not only written down officially by stenographers—which may have been of importance for the later publication of the text—but that also other churchgoers took notes of these sermons. Evidently, people endeavored to collect beautiful figures of speech, similes, and images used by the famous preacher, in order to use them occasionally for themselves.<sup>9</sup> Gregory of Nyssa in his fourteenth epistle tells how a letter was passed around in his literary circle, which was repeatedly read and even learned by heart by some, whereas others copied down excerpts in their notebooks. This situation of publicity in regard to literary production is characteristic of the entire Byzantine Age: You met in a rather large circle interested in literary matters—it is frequently called θέατρον, presumably because in its functions it had to compensate for the old stage theatre which was already dead at that time<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 457, note 11.

<sup>6</sup> Dion Chrys., Or. 18.6 (ed. J. de Arnim, II [Berlin, 1896], 252): πλείων γάρ ή αἰσθησις ὀπολλαγέντι τῆς περὶ τὸ ἀναγιγνώσκειν δύσχολίας.

<sup>7</sup> Or. 18.8: "Ομηρος δὲ καὶ πρῶτος καὶ μέσος καὶ ὑστάτος παντὶ παιδὶ καὶ ἀνδρὶ καὶ γέροντι, τοσοῦτον δέ τοι διδούς δύον ἔκαστος δύναται λαβεῖν.

<sup>8</sup> E. g., Syrianus, ed. H. Rabe, I (Leipzig, 1892), 98, l. 20 ff., 104, l. 17 ff. John Sicelotes, in Ch. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, 8 vols. (Stuttgart-Tübingen-London-Paris, 1832-36), VI, 71f. A. Brinkmann, "Phoibammon Περὶ μιμήσεως," *Rheinisches Museum f. Philologie*, 61 (1906), 117-34, gives the text of Phoibammon, who tries to invalidate the various objections against the practical possibilities of successful imitation. It is always the imitation of style, of the three χαρακτῆρες (*ἰσχυρός*, *μέσος*, *ἀδρός*), that is discussed here. The excerpt of John Doxopatres is printed below the text.

<sup>9</sup> Gregor. Naz., Or. 42.26 (PG, 36, col. 492 A).

<sup>10</sup> For examples for this use of the word, see H. Hunger, *Reich der Neuen Mitte* (Graz-Vienna-Cologne, 1965), 341.

—being an aesthete you enjoyed the recital of rhetorical pieces of some kind (official speeches, practice speeches, descriptions, letters, etc.), you were delighted with the contest of the authors, you participated if possible in the acclamation concerning the value of the recited pieces—and you took notes of everything that seemed useful for your own employment. Thus Quintilian's *aliud ex alio haeret* was turned into practice. There is evidence for the continuation of this institution from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We also have references to the contest, the passing around of letters, and the acclamations from the later part of the period. We may assume that the excerpting and jotting down of interesting phrases and expressions were still practiced. For the rest, the questions as to the nature and the extent of imitation will have to be judged from the texts of the Byzantine Age that have been preserved.

Before we turn to the discussion of the different forms in which classical models were imitated in Byzantine literature we shall consider to what extent ancient subject matter was received into Byzantine literature. First of all, it becomes evident that the introduction of ancient historical or mythological persons and events into epic poems, plays, or novels, which occurs so frequently in modern European literature,<sup>11</sup> remained relatively rare in the Byzantine literary productions in the high language. The mythological epic poems of Nonnus, Quintus Smyrnaeus, Tryphiodorus, Colluthus, Musaeus, and Mariannus<sup>12</sup> belong entirely to the fifth and sixth centuries, that is, to the early Byzantine Age. Later pieces of this genre are only the *Carmina Iliaca*, the *Theogony*, and the verse chronicle of John Tzetzes (twelfth century).<sup>13</sup> Apart from the very common didactic epic poems, the Byzantines on the whole preferred contemporary subjects. The drama, which continued to exist merely in the form of a few scanty productions intended for reading, as well as the novels in the high language from the time of the Comneni, which adopted very freely the background and the motifs prevailing in the novels that were written in the time of the Empire, are of no moment here. It is only the literature in the demotic language that shows signs of a certain tradition in respect to historical and mythological themes throughout the centuries. One has only to think of the Alexander prose romance or verse narratives, the poem on Belisarius, the *Achilleid*, or the *Vita Aesopi*. To what extent the original historical facts were blurred in these works or preserved only in a suggestion of classical atmosphere is not our concern here.

In Byzantine rhetorical writing we find classical subjects in practice speeches (μελέται), descriptions (ἐκφράσεις), narratives (διηγήματα), and character-drawings (ἡθοποίαι) that were continuously transmitted by the schools; with more or

<sup>11</sup> Many hundreds of such instances of the effects of ancient mythology on even modern literature are collected in my *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 6th ed. (Vienna, 1969).

<sup>12</sup> Presumably from his circle are 211 trimeters on the Twelve Labors of Heracles, ed. B. Knös in *Byzant. Zeitschrift*, 17 (1908), 406–21.

<sup>13</sup> *Carmina Iliaca*, ed. I. Bekker (Berlin, 1816); *Theogonie*, ed. I. Bekker (Berlin, 1840), and epilogue, ed. H. Hunger, in *Byzant. Zeitschrift*, 46 (1953), 302–307; *Verschronik*, ed. H. Hunger, in *Jahrbuch d. Oesterreich. Byzant. Gesellschaft*, 4 (1955), 13–49. Although written in verse, the Homer allegories of Tzetzes belong to the category of the commentaries, and therefore to nonfictional literature.

less extensive changes they belonged to the standard material of rhetorical handbooks and instruction periods. Just as in the second century Aristides had defended the old politicians of Athens, Miltiades, Cimon, Themistocles, and Pericles in his work *Περὶ τεττάρων*, historical figures like Epaminondas and Pelopidas or Alcibiades appeared in the *Miscellanea philosophica et historica* by Theodore Metochites. Similarly, his contemporary Thomas Magister, treats the old motif of the contention between the fathers of the two heroes killed in battle near Marathon in imitation of the rhetorician Polemon (ca. A.D. 130).<sup>14</sup> The same Thomas wrote a plea and a counterplea on the topic of exemption from taxes (*διτέλεια*), relying completely on Demosthenes' speech against Leptines as far as the contents are concerned.<sup>15</sup>

In order to offer a contemporary example of a *συμβουλευτικὸς λόγος*, in his *Outline of Rhetoric* Joseph Rhacendytus the Philosopher (first half of the fourteenth century) feigns the following situation: Somewhere in the Rhomaean empire an isthmus (*ἰσθμός*) is to be cut through; in accordance with the ancient rhetorical technique he then lists the individual points on which the orator had to give his opinion. At that time, however, such an enterprise would or would not have been carried out only in accordance with the authoritative decision of the emperor.<sup>16</sup> An attitude analogous to that of Thomas Magister and other Byzantines toward Demosthenes we find in John Chortasmenus toward Libanius, when, in the first half of the fifteenth century, he answers four letters of the famous sophist in his correspondence.<sup>17</sup>

Of the seven recently published model specimens of rhetoric by Procopius of Gaza (sixth century)<sup>18</sup> two are character-drawings of Aphrodite and of Phoenix as he appears in the ninth book of the *Iliad*; but in the other five pieces too (description of the spring, of a meadow, etc.) we find ourselves in the world of the ancient Greek gods and heroes. This is the rule with the great mass of such productions throughout the Byzantine centuries. One might, for instance, point to the "narratives" (*διηγήματα*) of Nicholas of Myra,<sup>19</sup> Severus,<sup>20</sup> or Nicephorus Basilaces,<sup>21</sup> which have been transmitted together with the *Progymnasmata*; one might also refer to the character-drawings of Aphthonius<sup>22</sup> and his imitators, which are collected in the first volume of the *Rhetores Graeci* by Walz. The short allegories on Tantalus, Sphinx, and Hephaestus by

<sup>14</sup> New edition by F. W. Lenz, *Fünf Reden Thomas Magisters* (Leiden, 1963). On p. viii, Lenz very characteristically comments on the nature of the imitation: "... in der Weise, dass wir auf den ersten Blick überall glauben, Polemon zu lesen, und doch nur ganz selten wörtliche Entlehnungen oder Zitate finden." (... in such a way that at first sight we think we are reading Polemon, and yet find verbatim adoptions or quotations very rarely.) A fundamental feature of Byzantine imitation!

<sup>15</sup> Also edited by Lenz, *op. cit.*, who, on the basis of manuscript studies, could deny to Aristides the authorship of these two speeches and attribute it to Thomas. The still unpublished speech "For the Olynthians" certainly belongs to the same category of speeches with ancient historical contents.

<sup>16</sup> Walz, *op. cit.*, III, 516–21.

<sup>17</sup> My edition of the letters of John Chortasmenus appeared in 1969.

<sup>18</sup> *Procopii Gazaei epistolae et declamationes*, ed. A. Garzya and R.-J. Loenertz (Ettal, 1963), 83–98.

<sup>19</sup> Walz, *op. cit.*, I, 269–72.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 537–39.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 428–42.

<sup>22</sup> *Aphthonii Progymnasmata*, ed. H. Rabe (Leipzig, 1926), 34ff.

Michael Psellus belong here as well.<sup>23</sup> In the case of the *ethopoeia*, Christian or contemporary topics were exceptions. Yet, of the approximately two dozen character-drawings of Nicephorus Basilaces (twelfth century) in Walz's collection, about twelve are concerned with subjects taken from the Old or the New Testaments, one dealing even with a "modern" topic.<sup>24</sup> In addition to these, we should like to mention one *ethopoeia* by Nicephorus Chrysoberges (twelfth-thirteenth century), namely, "What might a Christian philologist have said when Julian the Apostate forbade [the Christians] to read Hellenic books?" and one on the Virgin by Nilus Diassorenus (fourteenth century).<sup>25</sup>

Historiography and official rhetoric (speeches to the emperor and official orations of all kinds) were thoroughly rooted in the classical tradition, yet the main emphasis was never laid on classical contents. Most of the Byzantine historians were interested in a more detailed account of the time they themselves were living in, that is, of contemporary history. Ancient history they treated, if at all, as conscientiously as did the chroniclers, who always began their often rather sketchy outlines with the creation of the world.

In conclusion we can say that only a relatively small part of Byzantine literature is determined by the reproduction of classical contents and subject matter. Much greater is the number of those works that are in some other respect or even in a number of ways—and to a varying extent—characterized by the imitation of the ancients. This long-known fact which, as far as I know, has never found a specific and coherent treatment, must hardly be understood as if the Byzantines had consciously conceived the hundredfold application of ancient motifs, figures, and quotations as imitation. The fact is rather that the Eastern Empire had not experienced a break in its historical and cultural development as had the West, where such an interruption had been caused by the establishment of Germanic empires on formerly Roman soil. Again and again one discovers from remarkable details in the literature, art, and architecture of Byzantium that the cultural continuity had been preserved since antiquity.

Much of this situation was due to that intellectual development in the course of which highly gifted as well as learned Christian Fathers—I am referring to Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, and above all the Cappadocians—succeeded in introducing the new Christian values into the long approved literary-stylistic forms of pagan antiquity, and could eliminate every thought of the discrepancy between these two elements in the course of the development. Thus they created that intellectual attitude of Christian humanism which at all times claimed the loyalty of the most noble minds and the most outstanding writers of Byzantium.<sup>26</sup> A particularly original testimony

<sup>23</sup> Ed. H. Flach, *Glossen und Scholien zur Hesiodischen Theogonie* (Leipzig, 1876), 424–28.

<sup>24</sup> Walz, *op. cit.*, I, 466–525. The girl of Edessa who is deceived by a Goth (*ibid.*, 519–22) is borrowed from the *Passio SS. Guriae, Samonae et Abibi* by Symeon Metaphrastes (PG, 116, col. 145 D–161; *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, no. 736).

<sup>25</sup> K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byz. Litt.*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1897), 470 and 560. The *ethopoeia* of John Geometres on the Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (PG, 106, col. 932) comprises only a dozen lines.

<sup>26</sup> Hunger, *Reich der Neuen Mitte*, 355–69.

of this intellectual attitude, which reaches from the literature of the educated far into the realm of folklore, are those supposed prophecies of pagan philosophers on the Trinity, the Incarnation, and other Christian dogmas, which not only occur in the form of short passages in numerous manuscripts, but also are known in the form of characteristic presentations in large fresco cycles of many late- and meta-Byzantine monasteries and churches of monasteries.<sup>27</sup>

In an essay on the "Vorbildqualität und Lehrfunktion der byzantinischen Kunst," O. Demus recently emphasized the naturalness, the universality, and the representativeness of this art which he rightly calls a living Christian art.<sup>28</sup> Thus we usually feel that the imitation of this "intellektuellen Kunst, die ihre Mittel der analytischen Bewältigung des antiken Erbes mit bewusster Meisterschaft anwendete" (intellectual art that applied its means of analytically mastering the classical inheritance with conscious skill)<sup>29</sup> is a survival rather than a revival. Analogous conditions have to be kept in mind in regard to the literature of the Byzantines. Since one knew one's Homer, the tragedians, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato and Demosthenes, Plutarch and Lucian so well, one used quotations and allusions and adopted motifs and various associations very freely, and was quite unaware of utilizing foreign property or of even committing plagiarism.<sup>30</sup> The mutual penetration of the old Hellenic-pagan and Christian traditions in accordance with the principles of Christian humanism usually enabled authors to introduce mythological or historical examples of antiquity without giving offense to anybody by doing so. Those cases where personal enmity or extreme zealotry did bring about attacks on the "Humanists" shall be disregarded in this context.<sup>31</sup>

Some examples of this naive imitation of classical models are found in those cases where Christian or contemporary Byzantine personalities are replaced by mythological figures. The "as-if-by-chance" element of this pagan-Christian mixture gives a particular charm to the works of art we here refer to. The substitution of mythological figures ranked from circumstantially drawn comparisons to mere references or allusions.

In his sixth hymn (counting according to Terzaghi), Synesius presents Christ as a second Heracles, without mentioning the name of the Greek national hero. Like Heracles, Christ "cleaned up" the earth, the sea, the air (the

<sup>27</sup> Among the "prophets" in the refectory of the Lavra on Mt. Athos are depicted Socrates, Pythagoras, Hypatia, Solon, Cleanthes, Philon, Homer, Aristotle, Galen, Sibyl, Plato, Plutarch. Cf. Hunger, *Reich der Neuen Mitte*, 303. N. A. Bees, "Darstellungen altheidnischer Denker und Autoren in der Kirchenmalerei der Griechen," *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher*, 4 (1923), 107–28; K. Spetsieres, Εἰκόνες Ἐλλήνων φιλοσόφων εἰς ἐκκλησίας, in 'Ἐπιστημ. Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Φιλο. Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστ. Ἀθηνῶν, Ser. 2, Vol. 14 (1963–64), 386–458; I. Dujčev, "Die Begleitinschriften der Abbildungen heidnischer Denker und Schriftsteller in Bačkovo und Arbanasi," *Jahrbuch d. Oesterreich. Byzant. Gesellschaft*, 16 (1967), 203–209. Of great interest would also be a study of the abundant material offered by the frescoes of the Romanian monasteries of Moldavia.

<sup>28</sup> O. Demus, "Vorbildqualität und Lehrfunktion der byzantinischen Kunst," *Akten des 21. Intern. Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte in Bonn, 1964*, Vol. I: *Epochen europäischer Kunst* (Berlin, 1967), 92–98.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>30</sup> That imitation is not to be understood as κλοπὴ is emphasized already by the author of Περὶ ὑψους, 13.4. On writings περὶ κλοπῆς, cf. E. Stemplinger, *Das Plagiat in der griechischen Literatur* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1912), 33–80.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Hunger, *Reich der Neuen Mitte*, 359 ff.

domain of the demons), and the netherworld and eventually descended to Hades as the “helper of the departed” and as a god. The descent to the netherworld and the victory over hell are also portrayed as the deeds of a Christian Heracles: Christ defeated Hades and Thanatos just as Heracles overcame Cerberus and rescued Alcestis from death. Some years ago K. Weitzmann pointed to the iconographic connection between the figure of Heracles with Cerberus on a second-century sarcophagus in the British Museum and the Resurrection picture in the lectionary preserved in the treasury of the Lavra on Mt. Athos.<sup>32</sup> One may regard as the missing link between these two ancient monuments the reverse side of coins that depict the emperor dragging a captive after him, a representation which was popular on coins in the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>33</sup>

Georgius Pisides is known to have written a number of epic poems glorifying his imperial lord Heraclius (610–641). In the first book of his *Heraclias* he works out a σύγκρισις (comparison) between the Emperor and the Greek hero Heracles, which is suggested by the similarity of the names. Homer should not have addressed Heracles as a god, since the merit of having slain a boar and a lion were not as important for mankind as was the salvation of the world through the κοσμορύστης (savior) Heraclius.<sup>34</sup> The poet then juxtaposes the individual labors of the δωδέκαθλος and the achievements of his Emperor. In analogy to the Cerberus adventure, Heraclius descends to Hades, overcomes the mad monster (the Sassanid Chosroes II), and raises Alcestis, i.e., the *oikoumene* (the Christian world) from the dead. Like Heracles, the Emperor has killed a dragon (of the Hesperides) and a hydra (Chosroes). Just as Heracles cleaned up the Augean Stables, he has cleansed life which before had been covered with dirt (ὕπιῶντα τὸν πρὶν ἔξεκόπρωσεν βίον)—here we have a reminiscence of the crusade motif of the war against the Persians!<sup>35</sup> The Emperor has strangled the lion that destroys the world (κοσμοφθόρον = Chosroes); he has secured the golden apples of the Hesperides, i.e., he has reconquered the Byzantine cities (τὰς πόλεις ὅλας) that had been occupied by the Persians. The darkness (Chosroes) has vanished and the light (the imperial sun) has risen; a new life, another cosmos, a new creation have begun: καὶ κόσμος ἄλλος καὶ νεωτέρα κτίσις (I.83). As in the writings of ancient Greek philosophy, the word “cosmos” has here the meaning of world, but also of the great, tremendous order.

As is so frequently found in Byzantine literature—a tradition that goes back even to Clement of Alexandria—the mythological example is followed by a Christian one from the Holy Scriptures. Pisides compares his imperial lord to the patriarch Noah (ὁ Νῶε τῆς νέας οἰκουμένης). Just as Noah had en-

<sup>32</sup> Cf. K. Weitzmann, *Geistige Grundlagen und Wesen der Makedonischen Renaissance* (Cologne-Opladen, 1963), 39f., pls. 37, 38.

<sup>33</sup> A reference from a lecture of O. Demus, given at the Oesterreichische Byzantinische Gesellschaft. Cf. H. Cohen, *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire Romain*, I–VIII (Paris, 1880–1892): Constantine I (C 237), Constans (C 133), Julian (C 75ff.), etc. R. Ratto, *Monnaies byzantines* (Lugano, 1930; reprint, Amsterdam, 1959), 161ff.

<sup>34</sup> *Heraclias*, I.65–70, ed. A. Pertusi in *Giorgio di Pisidia, Poemi*, I (Ettal, 1960).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, I.76.

trusted himself and his family to the ark, Heraclius entrusted his existence to his army and was therefore secure from the κατακλυσμός Χοσρού. As the dove brought Noah an olive branch when the Flood was over, the Emperor could now gain the olive branch of peace.<sup>36</sup>

The Byzantine poet, however, does not simply compare a Christian example with a pagan one. Repeatedly he stresses—quite in accordance with imperial propaganda and the prevailing Byzantine attitude—that this war had the character of a crusade: A Christian basileus fought here against the heathen fire-worshipper<sup>37</sup> and astrologer Chosroes. Ironically Pisides asks: “Where are [now] the investigations into the secrets of the stars? Who drew up the horoscope of Chosroes’ fall?”<sup>38</sup> Heraclius, however, was victorious with the support of Christ, who had once again proved himself to be the “cornerstone.”<sup>39</sup> Through Christ as the “door” (πύλη),<sup>40</sup> the Emperor found the right way and became the good shepherd of his people. The aim of the crusade, however, was the destruction of the Persian gods, not out of hatred against the element of fire but in order to offer the creation, free and rescued, unto the Lord.<sup>41</sup> Following a basic thought of Byzantine imperial ideology, the poet has God act as “collaborator” of the Emperor: Heraclius appoints God commander-in-chief and thus secures the victory.<sup>42</sup> The role of the Holy Ghost is to overcome the language difficulties between the various peoples composing the army.<sup>43</sup>

The victorious struggle of Heraclius with his predecessor on the imperial throne, Phocas, is also presented in a mythological garb by Pisides. The usurper (τύραννος) Phocas is portrayed as the “tyrannical sea-monster on land”.<sup>44</sup> The poet deliberately does not give the name of the girl threatened by the monster, so as to leave it to the educated reader to choose between Andromeda and Hesione, both of whom were chained to a rock as sacrifices to such a monster and afterward set free, the one by Perseus, the other by Heracles. Again Pisides combines this substitution of contemporary persons by ancient mythological figures with the Christian tendency of his work and with an entirely topical allusion: Heraclius is said to have confronted the “debaucher of virgins” Phocas with the picture of the Immaculate Virgin (a pun upon the word παρθένος)—a tale which evidently refers to the fact that the fleet of the two Heracliiuses, father and son, sailing from Carthage to Constantinople for the overthrow of Phocas carried with it a picture of the Virgin and Child as a palladium.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, I.84–92.

<sup>37</sup> πυρσολάτρης, *ibid.*, I.14, 22ff., 181.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, I.61f.

<sup>39</sup> Ephes. 2:20. *Her.*, I.184.

<sup>40</sup> John 10:7, 9. *Her.*, I.193.

<sup>41</sup> *Her.*, II.213–30.

<sup>42</sup> *Exped. Pers.*, II.118f., ed. Pertusi. Cf. H. Hunger, *Prooimion* (Vienna, 1964), 88. *Idem*, “Kaiser Justinian I.,” *Anzeiger d. Oesterreich. Akademie d. Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse*, 102 (1965), 346.

<sup>43</sup> *Exped. Pers.*, II.170–76.

<sup>44</sup> τῆς γῆς τὸ κῆτος, *Her.*, II.11; κῆτος τύραννον, *ibid.*, II.22.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, II.13f.: δὲλλ’ ἀντιτάξας τῷ φθορεὶ τῶν παρθένων / τῷ φρικτὸν εἶδος τῆς ἀχράντου Παρθένου. Cf. Theophan., ed. C. de Boor, I (Leipzig, 1883), 298, l. 15ff.; Pisid., *Exped. Pers.*, I.139ff., with the commentary of Pertusi, p. 142f.

To the historian Agathias the relating of a historical event of his time provides an opportunity for including a mythological example in his account. King Chosroes I has his defeated general Nachoragan flayed and the empty skin put up on a pole. Agathias then tells the story of Apollo and Marsyas, not without rationalistic criticism of the myth and particularly of the disproportionate cruelty of the god (ἀπανθρωπία).<sup>46</sup> With a relevant quotation he refers to the *Dionysiaca* by Nonnus (I.42f.), adding casually that he cannot remember the context and the immediately preceding lines in Nonnus' work.<sup>47</sup>

In his attempt to describe the character of the Emperor Andronicus I, Eustathius of Thessalonica compares him to Proteus and Empusa.<sup>48</sup> Nicetas Choniates likens the Empress Euphrosyne, the wife of Alexius III, to Penelope because she succeeded in "undoing" the plot contrived by Contostephanus,<sup>49</sup> whereas Isaac II Angelus, who superseded the old Andronicus I on the throne, seems to him like Heracles who saved Andromeda (Constantinople) from the monster (Andronicus I) threatening her.<sup>50</sup> Ducas compares Andronicus IV who imprisoned his father and brothers, to Zeus who kept his father Cronus and his brothers Pluto and Poseidon within bounds in order to secure the powers of ruler for himself.<sup>51</sup>

The mythological example may be regarded as a stock element of Byzantine epistolography. With Libanius, for instance, the examples are legion. Usually mythological figures are introduced as models for the author's contemporaries, particularly for his addressees. Thus, as a model to an addressee, Libanius presents the Agamemnon who did not rebuke Odysseus for having failed in his mission to Achilles (*Il.*, IX.676f.).<sup>52</sup> In the eighteenth letter, the Athena of the first book of the *Iliad*, who appeases Achilles' wrath by order of Hera (*Il.*, I.194ff.), serves as a model for Libanius' relationship to Tatianus.<sup>53</sup> On another occasion Libanius challenges his addressee to imitate Achilles, who first inflicted the wound upon Telephus and then healed it again: "May you become an Achilles unto Telephus and heal the consequences of wrath through clemency."<sup>54</sup> The wording shows—here as well as in other instances—that in the mind of the writer the mythological figure has taken the place of his contemporary. Thus Libanius says on one occasion: "We beg you, Ajax, to lend him [Salvius] your shield and help him in a seemly way."<sup>55</sup> Odysseus' relationship to his protectress Athena, which is characterized by confidence, serves as a model for the relations between contemporaries of Libanius, namely

<sup>46</sup> Agathias, IV.23 (ed. R. Keydell [Berlin, 1967], 151f.).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: οὐ γάρ δὴ τῶν προγονιμένων ἐπῶν ἐπιμέμνησαι; by doing so, might he not want to create the impression that he has been quoting from memory?

<sup>48</sup> *La espugnazione di Tessalonica*, ed. S. Kyriakides (Palermo, 1961), 14, 1. 31–16, 1. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Nicetas Choniates, Bonn ed., 687.

<sup>50</sup> Nic. Chon., Speech No. 9, trans. F. Grabler, in *Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber*, Vol. 11 (Graz, 1966), 156.

<sup>51</sup> Ducas, 12.3 (ed. V. Grecu [Bucharest, 1958], 73, ll. 8–12).

<sup>52</sup> Liban., Ep. 432.4 (ed. R. Förster, X [Leipzig, 1921], 422, ll. 10–14).

<sup>53</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 18 (ed. Förster, X, 10, l. 6ff.).

<sup>54</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 1105 (ed. Förster, XI [Leipzig, 1922], 212, l. 13f.). Cf. the same motif in Ep. 754.7 (ed. Förster, X, 680, l. 4ff.).

<sup>55</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 1433.4 (ed. Förster, XI, 472, l. 6ff.): δεόμεθα δή σου τοῦ Αἰαντος μεταδοῦναι τε αὔτῷ τῆς ἀσπίδος καὶ βοηθῆσαι τὰ εἰκότα.

Tatianus and Hesychius,<sup>56</sup> and Theodore and Eusebius.<sup>57</sup> As a model for the similarity between children and their parents, the story of Odysseus and Telemachus in the fourth book of the *Odyssey* is used.<sup>58</sup> In all these examples, the number of which could be enlarged at will, mythological figures in characteristic and representative situations take—at least for an instant—the place of the addressees. The modern reader thus receives the impression of an ancient atmosphere.

Something similar can also be found in epigrams; here two examples from the *Palatine Anthology* may serve our purpose. Paul the Silentary dedicates a poem to the myth of Danae, to which he gives this rationalistic interpretation: Basically, every woman can be bought with gold. In fact the epigrammatist wants to confirm a general experience (the venality of love) by means of the story of Danae.<sup>59</sup> In the poem immediately following, Agathias Scholasticus tells (or feigns?) that a rival has alienated the affections of his girl from him. To illustrate the situation he uses well-known titles of comedies by Menander: the girl corresponds to Perikeiromene (The Shorn Girl), the rival to Misoumenos (The Odious One), the author himself to Dyskolos (The Malcontent).

In a second group of examples the imitation of antiquity pertains to whole scenes, to individual motifs, and finally to mere associations and slight allusions. All these may, but need not, be accompanied by quotations from classical authors.

A particular problem in this connection are various passages from Byzantine historians who provably borrowed also from the contents of some classical record which they may originally have wished to imitate in its formal aspects only. In such cases there is, of course, the danger that the historical truth might be falsified, a problem to which G. Moravcsik recently gave his attention.<sup>60</sup> Our distinguished colleague and friend was able to demonstrate by means of several examples that the identification of a classical model which was used by a Byzantine author for his report even in respect to its contents, does not necessarily discredit the Byzantine historian. Thus, for example, Priscus relates the conquest of Naissos (Niš) by the Huns in 441 in the form of a narrative<sup>61</sup> which in many respects reminds us, in its phraseology and coloring, of Thucydides' description of the conquest of Plataea (II.75f.), and which is reminiscent too of the conquest of Philippopolis described by Dexippus.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, the remark that the Huns used siege engines on the occasion need not too readily be doubted, for Procopius, for instance, gives the same account of the Sabirs, who were related to the Huns.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 855.1 (ed. Förster, XI, 13, l. 15ff.).

<sup>57</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 905.1 (ed. Förster, XI, 54, l. 5f.).

<sup>58</sup> *Od.*, IV.141ff. Liban., Ep. 93.1 (ed. Förster, X, 92, l. 15ff.).

<sup>59</sup> A. P., V.217 (ed. H. Beckby, I [Munich, 1957], 234).

<sup>60</sup> Gy. Moravcsik, "Klassizismus in der byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung," *Polychronion, Festschrift F. Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag* (Heidelberg, 1966), 366–77.

<sup>61</sup> *Historici Graeci Minores*, ed. L. Dindorf, I (Leipzig, 1870), 278–80: fr. 1b.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 184–86: fr. 19.

<sup>63</sup> Procop., *De bellis*, VIII.11 (ed. J. Haury, [Leipzig, 1963], II, 539ff.) Moravcsik, *op. cit.*, 370.

Classical reminiscences are very likely to occur in the historical episodes presented by authors who based their imitations on Herodotus and Thucydides. When the same Priscus, referring to the conclusion of peace between Péröz, king of Persia, and Kunchan, chief of the Kidarite Huns, tells that the Persian deceived the Hun by giving him not his sister—as had been agreed—but a servant as a wife,<sup>64</sup> the anecdote in Herodotus (III.1), where Amasis gives not his daughter but some other woman to Cambyses, suggests itself as a model. Nevertheless, the fights between Persians and Huns as well as the marriage which followed are not to be doubted, since they can be verified by means of Oriental sources. Priscus, however, adopted the form of a short tale from Herodotus in order to give his presentation a classical touch and offer his audience associations with the famous father of historiography.<sup>65</sup>

Procopius, in telling about a stratagem of the Hephthalites who built well-camouflaged pitfalls against hostile horsemen,<sup>66</sup> has obviously in mind the report by Herodotus (VIII.28) on a similar stratagem of the Phocians;<sup>67</sup> but, again, his account can be verified by Oriental sources, as Haury was able to show.<sup>68</sup> In such cases the historical credibility should not be prematurely questioned on the grounds that the imitation of the Byzantine author pertains even to the contents of his model.

In order to present certain qualities of their heroes more strikingly, historians and rhetoricians introduce mythological and historical figures for the sake of comparison. In presenting the heir to the throne Constantine (X) Ducas and the nobility of his birth, Psellus goes back as far as Achilles, the latter's father Peleus, and his grandfather Aeacus.<sup>69</sup> For the reigning emperor, famous rulers of antiquity are preferably used as patterns, for example Alexander the Great, Caesar, Augustus, Pyrrhus, Epaminondas, and Agesilaus for Constantine IX,<sup>70</sup> Alexander the Great for Alexius I Comnenus;<sup>71</sup> Cato the Stoic, whose equanimity could not be disturbed by his fever, appears as a counterpart to Isaac Comnenus, who ceaselessly tossed himself from side to side in his fever.<sup>72</sup> To impress more effectively upon the reader's mind the fascinating beauty of her mother Irene, Anna Comnena even invokes the petrifying effect of the Gorgon's head,<sup>73</sup> and in describing the battles of her father Alexius she introduces Typhon and the struggle between the Giants and the gods by way of comparison.<sup>74</sup>

As a result of the tradition which had remained unbroken since antiquity,

<sup>64</sup> *Exc. de legat.*, ed. C. de Boor, I (Berlin, 1903), 153, l. 25–154, l. 32.

<sup>65</sup> R. Benedicty, "Die historische Authentizität eines Berichtes des Priskos. Zur Frage der historiographischen Novellisierung in der frühbyzantinischen Geschichtsliteratur," *Jahrbuch d. Österreich. Byzant. Gesellschaft*, 13 (1964), 1–8.

<sup>66</sup> Procop., *De bellis*, I.4 (ed. Haury, I, 15, ll. 6–20).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. also Polyaen., *Strateg.*, VI.18.2 (ed. E. Woelflin and I. Melber [Leipzig, 1887], 297).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Moravcsik, *op. cit.*, 375f.

<sup>69</sup> Psell., *Chron.*, ed. E. Renauld, II (Paris, 1928), 134.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 51f.

<sup>71</sup> Anna Comn., XV.7.8 (Budé Coll.).

<sup>72</sup> Psell., *Chron.*, ed. Renauld, II, p. 130.

<sup>73</sup> Anna Comn., III.2.4.

<sup>74</sup> *Idem*, I.7.3.

a great number of mythological and historical situations and motifs had so deeply penetrated the minds of all educated Byzantines that we find them again and again in the works of the historians and rhetoricians. Some examples may suffice. First, those from mythology: ideal friendship is represented by the pairs Orestes-Pylades and Theseus-Pirithous, quarrelsomeness by the apple of Eris, a time of peaceful tranquillity by the "halcyon days"; the union of Alpheus and Arethusa stands for all-conquering love, Ixion and Hera for unfulfilled—today we should say frustrated—love, the Heliads' tears that were turned into amber stand for never-ceasing grief, the "helmet of Hades" for invisibility; cunning changeableness is represented by the versatile Proteus, rapid transitoriness by the "Gardens of Adonis", etc. Second, motifs from history: for the wisdom of the emperor and legislator stand Numa Pompilius or Lycurgus, for the murder of the tyrant, Brutus or Harmodius and Aristogiton, for fear of God, Publius Cornelius Scipio, for presumptuousness, Xerxes, for security of the walls, Semiramis, for a capricious disposition, the changing current of the Euripus, etc.

A limited number of mythological motifs became particularly popular in epistolography; in these cases one can speak of specifically epistolographic *topoi*. There is, first of all, Hermes, who, being the god of rhetoricians, was at the same time regarded as the divine friend of letter-writers. Libanius, for instance, writes on one occasion: "If Hermes and the other gods permit it, we shall meet within this month,"<sup>75</sup> and another time: "By Hermes, do remove that *prooimion* from your letter to me. . . ."<sup>76</sup> Ερμοῦ λογίου τύπος one used to say of correspondents to whom one wished to pay a compliment.<sup>77</sup>

To the stock themes in Byzantine letter-writing belongs the unquenchable desire to visit the addressee. To reduce the sometimes great distances one frequently longed for the winged sandals of Perseus.<sup>78</sup> The wish to visit his friend by way of flight is already expressed by the writer of a papyrus letter.<sup>79</sup> Libanius speaks several times of the desired wings, but only once of Perseus.<sup>80</sup> Procopius of Gaza, on the other hand, presents the motif in a clearly pronounced way: "Could I but become a Perseus and sail through the air on wings and be carried across the sea, so that I might—as soon as I wish—be with you and enjoy your love."<sup>81</sup> Later, we come across this motif in Nicephorus Uranus<sup>82</sup> and Michael Psellus.<sup>83</sup> Basil the Great uses the words of the Psalm (54:7): "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!" in the same connection.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Liban., Ep. 894.3 (ed. Förster, XI, 44, l. 18ff.).

<sup>76</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 1497.1 (ed. Förster, XI, 524, l. 21f.); cf. also Epp. 199, 269, 338, 884, 1145, 1400.

<sup>77</sup> Synes., Epp. 101 and 159 (ed. R. Hercher, *Epistolographi Graeci* [Paris, 1873], 699, 739); Thom. Mag., Ep. 1 (PG, 145, col. 405.2).

<sup>78</sup> On this motif, cf. G. Karlsson, *Idéologie et cérémonial dans l'epistolographie byzantine*, 2nd ed. (Uppsala, 1962), 57f.

<sup>79</sup> U. Wilcken, *Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1912), No. 481.

<sup>80</sup> Liban., Ep. 44.2.

<sup>81</sup> Procop., Ep. 58.6–8 (ed. Garzya and Loenertz); cf. also Epp. 29, 90, 123.

<sup>82</sup> J. Darrouzès, *Epistoliers byzantins du X<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1960), V, 47, l. 55f.

<sup>83</sup> Psell., Ep. 14 (ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexel, II ([Milan, 1941], 17, l. 15).

<sup>84</sup> Basil., Epp. 47 and 140 (ed. Y. Courtonne, I, II [Paris, 1957, 1961]); cf. also Niceph. Basilaces, Ep. 3, l. 4 (ed. A. Garzya, in *Byzant. Zeitschrift*, 56 [1963], 232).

Two components unite in the *topos* of the Sirens, which frequently recurs in Byzantine letters. In the earlier literature the moral motive seems to predominate which—sometimes with a reference to the ethical interpretation of the myth—sees the Sirens as temptations that beset man.<sup>85</sup> Later, the Sirens with their enticing song are understood as the voice, or rather the letter, of the correspondent, which has completely bewitched the writer. Examples of this interpretation are offered already by Synesius (Epist. 146) and Procopius of Gaza (Epist. 120); in Psellus, Planudes, and Demetrius Cydones it definitely predominates. Occasionally, the writer is proudly aware of the fact that his own letters, too, cast a spell which his partner finds difficult to evade. Thus, for instance, Psellus writes: “Sail past my Sirens!”<sup>86</sup> and in another passage he owns: “I am not able, as was the son of Laertes, to sail past your Sirens.”<sup>87</sup> Planudes, writing to a woman, admits that it would betray lack of education and even be offensive if he were deaf to the Sirens, i.e., her letters.<sup>88</sup> Demetrius Cydones hopes that in reading a letter of his correspondent he will have the impression of hearing his Sirens.<sup>89</sup> Another time, like Psellus, he speaks of these Siren songs as being reciprocal,<sup>90</sup> or, again, emphasizes the importance of those letters which he received on a long travel, a further *tertium comparationis* identifying the writer with Odysseus listening to the Sirens.<sup>91</sup> In a few cases we meet with relations of a different kind, as, for example, when Theophylact Simocattes juxtaposes the enchanting song of the Sirens with a lament of the Muses (Epist. 21), or when Cydones understands the Sirens as the personification of homesickness.<sup>92</sup>

Finally, quotations from classical authors contribute toward intensifying the impression of imitation on the reader or listener. Here we would like to recall that the Byzantines usually quote without giving the name of the author, or by giving it in a more or less encoded form. That “*the poet*” was Homer, the son of Olorus, Thucydides, and the man from Paeania, Demosthenes one learned in elementary school. Titles of works or even hints as to the more specific context of the quotation are found very seldom. Since one obviously used to quote from memory, inaccuracies and misunderstandings were inevitable. The identification of quotations on the part of the audience seems even to have been a kind of round game in Byzantium.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, there were certain quotations, especially from Homer, that enjoyed a special popularity, e.g., οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανή· εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω (*Il.*, II.204); οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ ἐύκνημιδας Ἀχαιοὺς τοιῆδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν (*Il.*, III.156f.);

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Synes., Epp. 32,146 (ed. Hercher, 654, 729); Procop., Epp. 57, 92, 110 (ed. Garzya and Loenertz, 33, 49, 57); Theoph. Sim., Ep. 82 (ed. Hercher, 785f.).

<sup>86</sup> C. N. Sathas, Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη, V (Paris, 1876), 296.

<sup>87</sup> Psell., Ep. 17 (ed. Kurtz and Drexl, 21, l. 11).

<sup>88</sup> Planud., Ep. 68, l. 8f. (ed. M. Treu [Breslau, 1890], 85). Cf. Epp. 21, l. 27ff.; 113, l. 68: here exceptionally the singular Σειρήν, in the same meaning as ὘ρφεύς and Ἰηγῆς.

<sup>89</sup> Dem. Cyd., Ep. 27, l. 33f. (ed. R.-J. Loenertz, I [Città del Vaticano, 1956]), at the end of the letter.

<sup>90</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 84, l. 23ff., also at the end of the letter.

<sup>91</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 106, l. 7ff. Cf. also Epp. 10, l. 5f.; 17, l. 42f.; 18, l. 10; 33, l. 38f.

<sup>92</sup> *Idem*, Ep. 237, l. 33f. (ed. Loenertz, II [Città del Vaticano, 1960]).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Hunger, *Reich der Neuen Mitte*, 342f.

εῦδεις, Ἀτρέος υἱὲ δαῖφρονος ἵπποδάμοιο· οὐ χρὴ παννύχιον εῦδειν βουληφόρον ἄνδρα, ὃ λαοὶ τ’ ἐπιτετράφαται καὶ τόσσα μέμηλε (*Il.*, II.23–25 = II.60–62); οὐ μέν πως νῦν ἔστιν ἀπὸ δρυὸς οὐδὲ ἀπὸ πέτρης (*Il.*, XXII.126; *Od.*, XIX.163), etc.

Since Byzantine authors writing in the high language liked to parade their learning, they quoted abundantly, sometimes using a mass of quotations, which one might call a kind of mannerism. Here I may also recall the fact that in such cases the mixture of pagan and Christian quotations was a pattern that was popular with many writers and can be traced back even to Clement of Alexandria.<sup>94</sup> As late as the early fourteenth century, Joseph Rhacendytēs the Philosopher expressed his opinion on this “pasting together” of quotations—in connection with the epistolary style—in his *Synopsis Rhetorices*, chapter 14.<sup>95</sup>

Sometimes it is a hardly extraordinary allusion or word combination that signalizes a quotation. Yet, when Procopius in his *Anecdota* says of the Emperor Justinian, ὅτι μετέωρος ἀρθείται καὶ ἀεροβατοίη, one will immediately think of Socrates in his basket, in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*.<sup>96</sup> When, however, in the same chapter the verbs ἀγριαίνομαι, or ἀγριόμαι, and σαίρω are jointly used, only a dictionary will refer them to a corresponding passage in Aristophanes.<sup>97</sup> Referring to Justinian with κυκῶν γάρ δεῖ καὶ ξυνταράσσων ἀνεσόθει ἐφεξῆς ἀπαντά, Procopius alludes to a passage in the *Knights*.<sup>98</sup>

We now have to turn to that kind of imitation which concentrated, without regard to the contents, on classical forms, on style. For the Byzantine author there was, of course, no conscious division between the different possibilities of imitation that we have pointed out. On the contrary, they usually went together. Our division was made only for the sake of a better arrangement of the material. Formal imitation pertains 1) to all linguistic phenomena, 2) to meter.

In regard to the language, the strictly and stiffly preserved Attic model affected phonetics, morphology, and stylistics. Until the end of the Byzantine Empire educated authors took pains, though with varying consistency, to write double tau instead of double sigma in φυλάττω, κηρύττω, γλῶττα, etc., as well as occasionally ξυν instead of συν, and γίγνομαι instead of γίνομαι.<sup>99</sup> The Attic dual, which had already fallen out of use in the literary *koine* of the Ptolemaic period, was, from Aristides up to the fall of Constantinople, the pride of many an author who boasted of his learning.<sup>100</sup> Authors writing in the high language retained the dative to a much greater extent than was required by

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 302f. Examples of clusters of quotations, for instance, in Nicetas Choniates: Bonn ed., 336 and 640; Speech No. 9, trans. Grabler, *op. cit.*, 151f. See furthermore F. Grabler, “Das Zitat als Stilmittel bei Niketas Choniates,” in *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses, München 1958* (Munich, 1960), 190–93.

<sup>95</sup> Walz, *op. cit.*, III, 558f.

<sup>96</sup> Procop., *An.*, 13.11 (ed. J. Haury, III, pt. 1 [Leipzig, 1906]); Arist., *Nub.*, 225.

<sup>97</sup> Procop., *An.*, 13.3; Arist., *Pax*, 620.

<sup>98</sup> Procop., *An.*, 9.50; Arist., *Equ.*, 692.

<sup>99</sup> Statistics of individual authors should be set up only on the basis of a thorough knowledge of the entire tradition. Even then it would be difficult to decide what exactly has to be attributed to the author and what to the copyist.

<sup>100</sup> E. Schwyzer, *Griech. Grammatik*, I (Munich, 1939), 127.

the conditions of the actual development of the language.<sup>101</sup> What was to be regarded as Attic, or un-Attic, or even solecistic was decided by the grammarians, who on the whole followed the doctrine that had been developed in the time of the Empire.<sup>102</sup> Contracted forms of nouns and verbs, Attic declension, the indefinite pronoun (particularly in its shortened forms του, τω), reduplication instead of the pluperfect with auxiliary verb (*ἔτερόχατο*), the middle voice, the optative, the accumulation of negations, the pleonastic use of particles (especially καὶ), the use of abstracts (τὸ ὑπήκοον, τὸ θῆλυ) instead of concretes, the perfect with present tense meaning, the *figura etymologica*, and many others were preferred because they were held to be Attic.<sup>103</sup>

An important, although negative, element of this linguistic imitation was the avoidance of all colloquial words and forms, and also of those often technical terms which—in the course of the development of the *koine* and later, during the centuries of the Empire—had penetrated from Latin into Greek. Though not all Byzantine authors followed this principle with equal consistency, most of them endeavored, in accordance with the imitation of classical models, to keep their own work free from all elements of the actually developing language, to keep it, I should say, germ-free, i.e., “sterile.” Thus the names of peoples and tribes that had not been members of the Byzantine Empire were, in every case, taboo. They had become known, it is true, in the early and middle Byzantine centuries, but had been unknown to the ancient historians. Now one tried, usually at random, to identify the contemporary tribes with those races whose names could be found in Herodotus, Thucydides, and other ancient historians, the spatial coordination or an imagined kinship or identity evidently deciding the issue. Considering the methods employed, we are not astonished to find that three, or four, or even more archaizing names were attached to every ethnical group by different Byzantine authors.<sup>104</sup> In a similar way the Byzantines rendered foreign titles and offices: Seljuk and Serbian governors,<sup>105</sup> and even their own generals, were called satraps simply because this term had been familiar to the ancient historians.<sup>106</sup>

The name that was usually applied to one of the Circus parties, the “Blues,” βένετοι in colloquial language, is “explained” by Procopius (ὁ δὴ κυάνεόν ἔστι),<sup>107</sup> who usually emphasizes also the Latin origin of certain terms as, for instance, δομέστικον τοῦτον καλοῦσι ‘Ρωμαῖοι,<sup>108</sup> or, τοῦ καλουμένου κοιάστωρος.<sup>109</sup> This attitude finds its particularly manneristic expression when, in spite of the enormous

<sup>101</sup> In the case of Cinnamus, this was demonstrated by F. Hörmann, *Beiträge zur Syntax des Johannes Kinnamos*, Diss. München (1938), 85–105; in the case of Eustathius of Thessalonika, by P. Wirth, *Untersuchungen zur byzantinischen Rhetorik des 12. Jahrhunderts*, Diss. München (1960), 60–74.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. G. Böhlig, *Untersuchungen zum rhetorischen Sprachgebrauch der Byzantiner, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Schriften des Michael Psellos* (Berlin, 1956), 1 ff.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 34 ff., 67 f., 72 ff., 85, 94 ff., 98 ff., 162 f., 201 ff., 215, 228, 234 ff.

<sup>104</sup> On this familiar phenomenon, cf. Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1958), II, 13 ff. *Idem*, in *Polychronion*, 372 f.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> H. Hunger, *Der byzantinische Katz-Mäuse-Krieg. Die Katomyomachia des Theodoros Prodromos* (Vienna, 1968), 113, on l. 293.

<sup>107</sup> Procop., *De bellis*, II.11 (ed. Haury, I, 203, l. 3 f.).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, III.11 (ed. Haury, I, 361, l. 16 f.).

<sup>109</sup> Procop., *An.*, 6.13; 9.41.

expansion of monachism in the whole East, and also in the capital, during the fourth and fifth centuries, in the middle of the sixth century Procopius still paraphrases consistently the most common word for monk, μοναχός, by writing: οὗσπερ καλεῖν μοναχούς νενομίκασι, and similar examples.<sup>110</sup> Theophylactus Simocattes tries to avoid the offensive colloquial βένετοι by paraphrasing it clumsily.<sup>111</sup> Nicetas Choniates speaks of the “one in charge of the mixing jug,” in order to avoid the title πιγκέρνης (cup-bearer), which is of Latin descent, and talks of “internal treasure houses” (τὰ ἔσω ταμιεῖα) so that he would not have to use the technical term (οἰκειοκόν βεστιάριον) for the privy purse of the emperor.<sup>112</sup> In practice, of course, it was hardly possible to stick to this mannerism consistently. Eustathius, for instance, vivaciously declares, in his report on the conquest of Thessalonica by the Normans, that he preferred to say κόμης instead of κόντος because he hated the barbaric, i.e., the Latin-Italic, expression.<sup>113</sup> In the same work, however, Latin terms like ἀδνούμιον or πρόβα occur, with which the author found no fault.<sup>114</sup>

From the time of the Empire, Attic dictionaries served as an important device for the avoidance of non-Attic words; in Byzantium, too, these lexica enjoyed great popularity. It has been estimated that about 2,500 Attic glosses from older dictionaries of this kind were included in the Byzantine lexica.<sup>115</sup> How great the interest in this subject must still have been at the time of the Palaeologi becomes obvious from the new compilations by Manuel Moschopulus and Thomas Magister.<sup>116</sup> It meant the highest possible praise for a writer if his style was acknowledged to be perfectly Attic; such tribute was payed to Theodore Metochites by his pupil Nicephorus Gregoras in his epitaph<sup>117</sup> and by Nicephorus Chumnus.<sup>118</sup>

The strong trend toward the imitation of classical literature in Byzantine writing also made itself felt in the development of Byzantine prosody. Since the classical iambic trimeter had been accepted as the most common meter, a grotesque situation, though typical of Byzantium, ensued during the early Byzantine centuries, when gradually the accenting meters gained ground. Although the syllables were no longer measured but counted and the sense of longs and shorts became more and more lost, which is reflected in the uncertainty as to the use of the so-called *dichrona* (the vowels alpha, iota, epsilon), most of the poets, impelled by their classicistic ambition, tried to present to the educated reader a trimeter that was perfect even in the sense of the classical quantitative meter. In this case the imitation of the ancients resulted in a discrepancy between poetry as it was read and poetry as it was heard,

<sup>110</sup> Cf. the index of Haury's edition (III, pt. 2 [Leipzig, 1913]), 387.

<sup>111</sup> Theoph. Sim., ed. de Boor, 296, l. 24f.

<sup>112</sup> Nic. Chon., Bonn ed., 384 and 708.

<sup>113</sup> *La espugnazione di Tessalonica*, ed. Kyriakides, 110, ll. 16–18.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 66, l. 17; 68, l. 13.

<sup>115</sup> H. Erbse, *Untersuchungen zu den attizistischen Lexika* (Berlin, 1950), 6.

<sup>116</sup> Manuel Moschopulus, Συλλογὴ δύνομάτων δττικῶν, ed. A. Asulanus (Venice, 1524); Thomas Magister, Ἐκλογὴ δύνομάτων καὶ ρήματων δττικῶν, ed. F. Ritschel (Halle, 1832).

<sup>117</sup> Nic. Greg., X.2 (Bonn ed., I, 477).

<sup>118</sup> J. F. Boissonade, *Anecdota nova* (Paris, 1844), No. 133, p. 156; cf. also H. Hunger in *Byzant. Zeitschrift*, 45 (1952), 9.

and developed a "poetry for the eye" which was no longer related to contemporary language and versification. The frequently occurring imitations of the classical dactylic hexameter and elegiac distich, of trochaic octosyllabics and anacreontics show the same tendency. Of course, it would have been better had secular poetry made itself independent of the rules of quantity, as religious hymn-poetry had done by following the example of Romanus Melodus, and had it cultivated the genuine Byzantine meter, namely the "political" fifteen-syllable line. Actually, however, the hexametric attempts of later scholars, like for instance John Chortasmenus (first half of the fifteenth century), are indications of an utter inability to appreciate the peculiarity of classical meter.<sup>119</sup>

A characteristic feature of Byzantine art and literature, as yet perhaps hardly noticed, is the balance between a strict adherence to an acknowledged and accepted tradition—in our case the imitation of antiquity—on the one hand, and the greatest possible variation of detail on the other; in the best works of art and literature this is excellently done. The ingenuity of the writer will express itself in an abundance of stylistic details and phrasings of his own coinage, which, however, have to be sought; the superficial observer will see nothing but the repetition of well-worn clichés. I first pointed to this phenomenon in my book on the *prooimion*, five years ago; in studying the preambles of the documents, the composition of which was entrusted to men who were extremely well versed in literary matters, I had noted this combination of traditionalism and abundant variation.<sup>120</sup> The antinomy of strict imitation in regard to the whole and broad diversity in detail is of consequence in the much abused centos, the patchwork poems, to which a short discussion shall be dedicated here from the viewpoint of the Byzantine literary historian.

Two epigrams by the philosopher and mathematician Leo (fifth century) that are contained in the ninth book of the *Palatine Anthology* shall be cited here as examples of the Greek pagan cento.<sup>121</sup> The first consists of six, the second of twelve hexameters; each of these lines is a complete verse from the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. In the first epigram we can trace only one minor deviation from this strict rule: in line 4 the nominative *γυνώς* had to replace the original accusative, and line 5 was composed of parts taken from two verses. The first word of the last verse is used with a meaning different from that in Homer, namely as an obscene homonym, which is the point of the whole epigram. The second epigram (Hero and Leander) is similarly composed of complete verses from Homer. Here the only deviation from the verbally rendered passage from Homer occurs in line 6 (middle of the epigram), which again consists of parts of two verses taken from the *Odyssey*; these two lines were of necessity retouched for grammatical reasons, but remained otherwise unchanged. In these twelve lines the poet succeeded in recounting the story of Hero and Leander briefly, without apparent effort, and at the same time without grammatical errors—all this without himself having troubled to compose a single verse or part

<sup>119</sup> On this problem, cf. Hunger, *Der byzantinische Katz-Mäuse-Krieg*, 30ff.

<sup>120</sup> Hunger, *Prooimion*, 17 and 58.

<sup>121</sup> A. P., IX.361 and 381 (ed. Beckby, III [Munich, 1958], 222, 236). On pagan centos, cf. Stempfänger, *op. cit.*, 193–95.

of a sentence. A praise of such methods will hardly pass the lips of the modern reader who expects original ideas of a poet's genius. Whatever the case for originality may be, one will have to admit that such achievements were possible only on the basis of a most intimate familiarity with the text of Homer, a deep understanding and knowledge of the language, and an excellent memory. After all, we cannot believe that the writers of centos went, *kalamos* in hand, through the whole text of Homer searching for suitable lines—or that they even consulted computers! These patchwork poems are, rather, testimonies of an extraordinary performance of the memory and of an active control over the material, faculties which—though far from indicating genius—belong within the range of a *techne*, in the classical meaning of the word.

It is true that St. Hieronymus had condemned the centos as childish nonsense long before the publication of these epigrams.<sup>122</sup> In spite of this, Bishop Patricius and the Empress Eudocia, the wife of Theodosius II, undertook the task of molding the Incarnation and the life of Jesus into the shape of Homer-centos.<sup>123</sup> This work undoubtedly required even greater versatility than those pagan centos composed by Leo the Philosopher which we have already discussed: here it was a completely disparate subject that had to be rendered in Homeric lines. Thus, it is not astonishing that things do not end up nearly as smoothly as they do in Leo's centos. In fact, non-Homeric elements are repeatedly inserted, and the style as well as the grammar leave much to be desired. I should suppose, however, that after a closer study of the manuscripts a better text could be produced. A. Ludwich, the editor, took no interest in this aspect; in the Latin preface he clearly expresses his contempt for such "bungling pieces of work."<sup>124</sup> In my opinion, in this enterprise of the Bishop and the Empress we must see neither narrow-mindedness nor snobism—the latter could much better be applied to the work of Leo the Philosopher—rather, we should understand it as the naive and moving attempt to clothe the history of salvation, which is of fundamental importance to every Christian, in that linguistic garb which was the most venerable to every Greek, namely, the verses of Homer. It is the same spirit to which numerous Byzantine and Russian icons owe their more or less precious, though artistically often uninteresting, metal covers.

To a different order belong the two Byzantine dramatic works of the twelfth century which were intended to be read; of these the one belongs completely, the other partially, to the category of the centos in a wider sense.

A third of the 2610 lines of *Christus Patiens* (Χριστὸς πάσχων)<sup>125</sup> is borrowed from classical models, mostly from Euripides, the *Medea* and the *Bacchae* having the greatest share in the contribution, some others of his plays following in this order: *Hippolytus*, *Rhesus*, and, far less often, *Orestes*, *Hecuba*, and

<sup>122</sup> Hieron., Ep. 53.7: *Puerilia sunt haec et circulatorum ludo similia*.

<sup>123</sup> Edition of chapters 1–13 and 50 (approximately 1950 lines in all) by A. Ludwich (Leipzig, 1897).

<sup>124</sup> Ed. Ludwich, p. 87: *nam huius generis libri, qui haud pauci adhuc in bibliothecis latent, hodie a nemine digni habentur, qui accuratus explorentur .... Emendatiunculae paucae mihi fere invito (!) exciderunt inter scribendum: hunc igitur campum, quem videbam nimis sterilem esse, aliis patientioribus permitto diligentius colendum*.

<sup>125</sup> Ed. J. G. Brambs (Leipzig, 1885); A. Tailier (Paris, 1969).

*The Trojan Women.* About three dozen lines are taken from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and *Prometheus Vinctus*, as well as from *Alexandra* by Lycophron. In accordance with the old tradition of Christian humanism and the methods of quoting discussed above, numerous borrowings from the Old and New Testaments are inserted between the many hundreds of classical quotations. The author—whose identity remains unknown—was certainly not a genius, but he was a well-versed writer and an expert on ancient tragedy as well as on the Holy Scriptures.

The following example should help to illustrate the nature of these adoptions:

- 1127 Τί ταῦτ' ἀλύω; πειστέον τοῖς σοῖς λόγοις  
     // *Hipp.*, 1182 τί ταῦτ' ἀλύω; πειστέον πατρὸς λόγοις
- 1128 ἔργοις θ', δοῦ ύπεδειξας εἰς μαρτυρίαν,  
     // John 10:25 τὰ ἔργα δὲ ἐγὼ ποιῶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ πατρός μου, ταῦτα  
         μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ
- 1129 ὡς ἔστιν ὅπαν σοι θελητὸν δυνατόν.  
     // Ps. 110:2 μεγάλα τὰ ἔργα κυρίου, ἔχητημένα εἰς πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ
- 1130 Πολλῶν ταμίας ἔστιν ἀέλπτων Θεός,  
     // *Med.*, 1415 πολλῶν ταμίας Ζεὺς ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ
- 1131 πολλά τ' ἀέλπτως πολλάκις κραίνει Θεός,  
     // *Med.*, 1416 πολλά τ' ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοὶ
- 1132 τὰ δ' αὖ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐφεῦρε καὶ τέλος.  
     // *Med.*, 1417 καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη
- 1133 σὺ δ' ἀδοκήτων αὐτὸς εὗροις μοι πόρον.  
     // *Med.*, 1418 τῶν δ' ἀδοκήτων πόρον ηὔρε θεός.
- 1134f. Καὶ μὴν δδ' ἱώσητος ἐν σπουδῇ ποδός  
         στείχει, νέον τι πρᾶγμ' ἵσως ἔχων φράσαι.  
     // *Rhes.*, 85f. καὶ μὴν δδ' Αἰνέας καὶ μάλα σπουδῇ ποδός  
         στείχει, νέον τι πρᾶγμ' ἔχων φίλοις φράσαι.
- 1136 'Ατάρ τόδ' ἄλλο θαῦμα καὶ παρ' ἐλπίδα,  
     // *Bacch.*, 248 ἀτάρ τόδ' ἄλλο θαῦμα τὸν τερασκόπον
- 1137 μύστην νύχιον τῷδε συντρέχοντά πως  
     // John 19:39 ἥλθεν δὲ καὶ Νικόδημος, δὲ ἐλθὼν πρὸς  
         αὐτὸν νυκτὸς τὸ πρῶτον.
- 1138 σκεύη φέροντα προσφυᾶ τῇ καθόδῳ.  
     // John 19:39 φέρων μίγμα σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης ὡς λίτρας ἑκατόν.

The alternation of pagan-classical and biblical elements is throughout observed. Where lines from tragedies are adopted, the changing of one word often suffices to establish the necessary meaning. Thus, for instance, in 1127 πατρὸς λόγοις is changed to τοῖς σοῖς λόγοις, in 1130 Zeus has become Θεός, in 1131 θεοὶ has been turned into Θεός. In 1134 the name is changed (Josepos instead of Aineas), in 1135 the unsuitable φίλοις is replaced by ἵσως. The prose text of the Gospel of St. John had to be transformed into twelve-syllable lines, which was probably easier work for a somewhat skilled rhyming than finding corres-

ponding lines in pagan literature. Lines 1136–38 contain such a passage, joined to a line from the *Bacchae*.

In the *Katomyomachia* by Theodore Prodromus the imitation of antiquity is a parody of ancient Greek tragedy, as I have tried to demonstrate in my recently published edition of this work.<sup>126</sup> The structure of the play which consists of elements that are characteristic of classical tragedy, the messenger scenes, stichomyths, and rheseis in the manner of the classical models, as well as an abundance of quotations and linguistic reminiscences confirm this opinion. The comical effect emerges mainly from the circumstance that actions, speeches, and behavior typical of gods, heroes, and great men in ancient tragedy are attributed in the play to small, timid animals, namely mice. The tragic diction befitting the heroism of human beings produces a comical effect in the mouths of timidly shivering mice. With regard to all of this, I refer to my edition and quote here only one characteristic verse (218): καλὸν τὸ νικᾶν (= Eur., *Phoen.*, 1200)—ἀλλὰ δειλίᾳ μὲν ἔχει: “It is wonderful to be victorious—but I am a coward.”

As far as language is concerned, the imitation of classical tragedy in the *Katomyomachia* is found in certain forms of words and in whole phrases; these, too, are listed in my edition. With the accumulation of such quotations and borrowings in the second half of the *Katomyomachia*, the text in some passages (particularly ll. 240ff. and 323ff.) has almost the character of a cento. When studying these imitations one discovers in many details the variation mentioned above. One would search in vain for a personage picking up the dialogue with a καλῶς ἔφοσας (122) in tragedy, where it is always καλῶς ἔλεξας. The quotation from *Hecuba* (689), ἀπιστός ἀπιστά καινὰ καινὰ δέρκομαι, has the changed ending μοι λέγεις. The μηνῦσαι κακά of the messenger in the *Phoenissae* (1218) has been turned into κακῶν μηνυτής in the *Katomyomachia* (315). Thoughts frequently expressed in tragedy are presented by the Byzantine author in his own words:

Eur., <i>Alc.</i> 1076	οὐκ ἔστι τοὺς θανόντας ἐς φάσις μολεῖν
Eur., <i>Heracles</i> , 297	καὶ τίς θανόντων ἥλθεν ἐξ Ἀΐδου πάλιν;
Kat., 269	οὐδεὶς θανόντας ἔξεγείρει τοῦ τάφου.

When the lady mouse in the *Katomyomachia* does not immediately see the second messenger because she is so agitated over the death of her son, a similar thing happens to her as to Euripides' *Electra*, who, due to excitement, does not recognize the messenger:

Eur., <i>El.</i> , 767	ἐκ τοι δείματος δυσγνωσίαν εἶχον προσώπου.
Kat., 275f.	ἐκ τοῦ πάθους δλωλα καὶ συνετρίβην καὶ τὰς κόρας ἤμβλυνα τὰς τῶν ὁμμάτων.

What is more, the expression κόραι τῶν ὁμμάτων occurs three times in the *Orestes* of Euripides (469, 1261, 1319).

In the essay quoted above O. Demus has touched upon the interchangeability of the iconographic schemata (e.g., Ascension of Christ ~ Forty Martyrs of Sebaste) and of the elements of different pictures. Art historians have

<sup>126</sup> Hunger, *Der byzantinische Katz-Mäuse-Krieg*, 51–65.

noticed transpositions of groups of figures, of individual figures, and even of individual gestures.<sup>127</sup> Mutatis mutandis, this seems to apply also to some products of Byzantine literature in the high language. If we turn from a study of the *Katomyomachia* to the contemporary novel we will find that passages such as the “leader’s speech” of Kreilos, delivered at the mobilization of the mice, the lamentation of the lady mouse over her dead son, or one of the messengers’ reports could easily be taken out of their context and inserted in the novel of Prodromus (*Rhodanthe and Dosicles = RD*)<sup>128</sup> or in that of Nicetas Eugenianus (*Drosilla and Charicles = DC*).<sup>129</sup> If one takes a closer look at these two novels, one finds that both contain elements that indeed fit the respective context but could just as well stand for themselves or occur in some other context. In *RD* this is the case with the speeches of the military commanders, several letters, and the Helios hymn of Satyrion, in *DC* it is the case with a considerable number of “lyrical” insertions; among the latter are lengthy laments, confessions of love, love letters, and songs, as well as all sorts of ἔκφρασις (descriptive epic). These passages are of particular interest because of the kind of imitation employed by the author. The letters (in twelve-syllable verses), for instance, are little masterpieces of Byzantine epistolography. One lament and two songs are written in dactylic hexameters; occasionally a refrain occurs in which one soon recognizes Theocritus as the model.

The conscious mannerism of the poet, who varies his use of imitation, becomes obvious from three passages imitating epigrams that are contained in the *Anthologia Palatina*. A close correspondence exists between *A.P.*, V.253 and *DC*, III.163–72. The train of thought is the same in both cases: the girl bashfully looks to the ground, yet is fumbling with her belt; Kypris is not in accord with bashfulness; the girl should nod in assent. Eugenianus used ten twelve-syllable lines in place of the two distichs of the model and thus his version turned out to be somewhat longer. The decisive catchwords correspond: κάτω νεύουσα ~ νεύεις κάτω; ζώνη ... ἀκρολυτεῖς ~ ζώνη ... ἀκρολυτεῖς; αἰδώς νόσφι πέλει τῆς Κύπριδος ~ οὐκ οἴδεν αἰδὼς Κύπρις; finally, a variation: νεύματι τὴν Πιαφίην δεῖξον ὑπερχομένη ~ ἐμοὶ χαρίζου καν τὸ νεῦμά σου μόνον. The extensions by Eugenianus are unessential to the train of thought.

The imitation of *A.P.*, V.259, in *DC*, III.243–54, is done slightly differently. Here, not only the main thoughts but also the vocabulary of the two passages largely correspond. In this case four distichs are transformed into eight twelve-syllable lines; consequently, no room for extensions was left: δύματά σευ βαρύθουσι ~ βαρύνεται σὸν δύμα; πόθου πνείοντα ~ τοῦ πόθου γέμον; ὕχρος ~ ὕχρότης; παννυχίησιν δύμιλήσασα παλαίστραις ~ παλαίστραις δύμιλησας παννυχοῖς; ὅλβου ~ ὅλβιος; τήκει θερμὸς ἔρως ~ ἔρως φλέγει; εἴης εἰς ἐμὲ τηκομένη ~ εἴης πρὸς ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον ἐκκεκαυμένη. In spite of this remarkable correspondence, there are also unexpected variations: ἔοικας ὑπνῶν ἐνδεῆς εἶναι, γύναι has only a distant similarity with the corresponding passage in the model used; δς σε περιπλέγδην ἔχε πήχεσι is

<sup>127</sup> Demus, *op. cit.*, 95.

<sup>128</sup> Ed. R. Hercher, in *Erotici Scriptores Graeci*, II (Leipzig, 1859), 289–434.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 437–552.

changed to δέ χεῖρας αὐτὰς ἔμβαλών σαις ὠλέναις. Finally, the whole passage is extended at the end by four lines which are dedicated to the Telephus-motif (δέ τρώσας καὶ ίάσεται; here: νοί, παῦσον, ὡς ἔτρωσας, ήπατος πόνους).

The third example of imitation, *A.P.*, V.273 ~ *DC*, III.174–96, is limited to the basic thought (old age takes revenge on coy beauty) and to a few lexical correspondences: ἀφῆκε χάριν ~ ἀφῆκε . . . χάριν; μαῖς ὑπεκλινθη ~ μαστὸς . . . ὑπεκλιθη; πέσον δφρύες ~ πέπτωκεν δφρύς; φθέγματι γηραλέω ~ γηραλέον τὸ φθέγμα; πολιήν (last line but one) ~ πολιῷ (at the beginning); σοβαραῖς (last line) ~ σοβαράς (fourth line). The quantity differs (four distichs ~ twenty-three twelve-syllable verses), the sequence is partly altered: the concluding statement of the epigram is prefixed as a motto in Eugenianus' passage. A number of lines are intentionally greatly altered. The last third of Eugenianus' passage is skilfully enlivened by a seeming stichomyth of asyndetic half-lines—rhetorical questions put to the girl and ironical replies immediately following; this passage has no counterpart in the model used.

One could extend this survey of the “insertions” in *DC*, and soon one would have quite a number of structural elements which could at will be inserted in other novels. Here we are confronted with a peculiarity of Byzantine imitation of antiquity which has its striking parallels in the visual arts. As a particularly instructive object the famous ivory casket of Veroli should be mentioned here, to which Erika Simon dedicated a thorough and, I believe, pioneering interpretation a few years ago.<sup>130</sup> Mrs. Simon succeeded in finding convincing explanations for all the individual scenes on the casket by using the epic poem of Nonnus as a basis of comparison. Her explanations proved some of the former interpretations to be completely immaterial. In the group of men hurling stones, declared by Weitzmann to be a mechanical adoption from the Roll of Joshua, which turned out instead to signify the assault of Typhon upon heaven, we have again an example of the interchangeability and ambiguity of such groups of figures. Similar considerations are relevant in the case of the “quotations” from Euripides—which are of particular interest to us—namely the pairs Phaedra-Hippolytus and Bellerophon-Stheneboea. With good reason E. Simon does not regard these as illustrations of plays but as symbolically condensed pictures which are in some way or other related to the purpose of the object (nuptial casket). The occasionally Christian interpretation of pagan-mythological scenes (boy extracting thorn and Phaedra entangled in sin) also fit very well into the frame of our argumentation. As in the case of the casket of Veroli, where—according to this new interpretation—a number of parts which might have been used in different ways were composed to form a new unity (here a nuptial casket), so we may understand several works of middle Byzantine literature, e.g., the novels, to be similarly constructed.

In conclusion it can be said that, however manifold and varied in respect to quantity and intensity the imitation of antiquity may have been, it certainly belonged to the essential features of Byzantine literary works in the high language.

<sup>130</sup> E. Simon, “Nonnos und das Elfenbein-Kästchen aus Veroli,” *Jahrbuch d. Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, 79 (1964), 279–336.